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ABSTRACT

The question of whether recent changes in the labor market will likely have an adverse effect on people's expectations of work and their willingness to participate in the labor process was examined in a study of the impact of mass unemployment on expectations of work and productivity. Data regarding employment/unemployment and productivity in the United Kingdom and, to a lesser extent, the larger European Community countries were analyzed to identify patterns related to the following issues: expectations of work; changes in the distribution of employment and means of production; technological innovation and job insecurity; personal consequences of unemployment; and job insecurity and social stability. Little evidence was found to indicate that unemployed people or their supporters are willing or able to develop effective political responses to their situation or sustain other forms of concerted public protest. Despite recent changes in the structure and security of the labor market, individuals still remained willing to participate in the labor process to fulfill their four key expectations of work (income, security, creativity, and social interaction). Anticipation or experience of joblessness did not appear to undermine the desire for continued participation in the labor process. (Forty-six tables and 280 references are included.) (MN)

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